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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
SOURCE/METHOD/EXEMPTION 3B2B
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2006

SECRET

From: Aleks KURGVEL.
To: WHOM IT MAY CONCERN, via The Supervisor.
Subject: A letter received from Soviet Estonia, in connection with
my intelligence activity in 1945.
Date of reporting: 21 Sep., 1962.

1. The Subject-Letter.

On 10 September a letter arrived at my New York address and was forwarded by my family to Washington. This letter, mailed in New York on 7 Sep. '62, included a note from the pastor of my congregation, Rev. R. Kiviranna, who wrote that the letter, which he was forwarding to me, was given to Mrs. Kiviranna in Munich when she visited West Germany. (According to my information Mrs. Kiviranna visited Germany during the summer 1962.)

This subject-letter is here attached, together ^{with/} the translations of the two separate writings which the envelope contained. The envelope was open when it reached my family.

Summary of the letter:

Both writings show the date of 6 June 1961 (sic), the place name TARTU, in Estonia, and the writer's name Viktor VIIGIMAA. The envelope shows, that it was mailed in TURKU, Finland, on 16 June 1961.

The envelope and one of the writings were addressed to the Voice of America, Munich, Germany. In this writing Viigimaa asked that the other writing be forwarded to Mr. KURGVEL with whom he had been together on island RUEGEN, Germany, in 1945.

The second writing was addressed to Mr. Kurgvel, and I recognise that it was really meant for me. Viigimaa asked that his mother's address be used in case of a reply:
Alma VIIGIMAA, Suur-Kaar 72, Tartu, Estonia.

Viigimaa writes that he had "a long trip" because of the event which saw us together on Ruegen. He is back home now, in difficult circumstances, and he hopes that I can help him, that I have means for this. He is married. He works in a brewery. (He should be about 35-40 now.) Indirectly he promises to write more when the contact will be established.

2. The Background.

In April 1945, between 20 and 24th, I dispatched from Ruegen 15 Estonian clandestine intelligence agents to Estonia. Among those men was one whose true name was Viigimaa. The aim of this project was to contribute to the future liberation of Estonians from the Communists, with the help of the Great Western Democracies, to the Authorities of which I had to report this enterprise.

The agents knew this, this was the only motor which made them go at that stage of WW II when the surrender of Germany was anticipated to be near. The men were chosen according to the task: good Estonian patriots, anti-communist minded, about 20, with the exception of 3 men who were between 25 and 30. They all had been conscripts or volunteers in the Estonian units of the German Army or the "Waffen SS". All were gallant, some rowdy, non-coms, and all had asked to be sent out for this mission.

The men were divided in five groups, each group equipped with a W/T set. They were sent off in two flights, both carried out by a special unit of the German Navy, the regular carrier of the intelligence missions.

My German superior, the C.O. of the unit, knew of the double role of this mission: officially the groups had to collect information for the German Navy, and beside of this, to be started after the collapse of Germany, for those Western Powers which I could contact.

I reported the Missions to the British Mil. Intelligence in Hamburg on 4th May 1945. As a result of this, my Estonian W/T station in Schleswig Holstein, manned by qualified Estonian W/T operators, was cashed by the British. All the men of this station and I myself were kept in British detention over one year.

Not a single W/T contact was made with those groups up to the liquidation of my station. The groups were even not heard, neither by my men, nor by the German stations which had to monitor these communications.

Due to the security measures taken by me after I found rather great distrust in the British camp, I have today no information as to the true names of these 15 men sent out. I recollected Viigima being one, and from the papers, which I was returned by the British when released in 1946, I learned three or four more true names, due to the errors these men had committed when writing their last notes before the start.

I still have, and add to this report, 18 sheets with those handwritten stories from the life of these men. I asked them to do this for the purpose of later identification of them by persons who might replace me and my W/T staff later. Although there is an interval of more than 16 years between the times when these notes were written and when the subject-letter was written, it could still be possible to find out whether this letter is really written by one of these hands, and by which of them. If this could be positively determined, then there exist some possibilities to ask Viigima some questions, so he could identify himself by giving right answers to those specific questions based upon those stories.

One exception must be mentioned in the above general picture. One of these 15 men, going under the covername LUHA, with the first name starting with O or V, got fear when waiting at the airbase for good mission weather. He was the main W/T operator of a three-men group. His elimination would have had bad influence on the moral of all the groups because they were stationed together, he knew too much for being left behind in those circumstance of near collapse of German forces and the surrender to the Soviets. Therefore, after some talks I had with this man

SECRET

-3-

and his groupleader, he agreed, that it was safer for him to go along and to work for his homeland, than to stay behind. He went with the group. His groupleader was secretly given free hand as to his handling of this man, taking into consideration his recovery from the fear, the security of the entire group, and the man's value for the group as their main W/T operator. Nothing about his fear was told to the other men.

There is a vague hint, that Viigimaa could be identical with Luha: Viigimaa gives Tartu for his present home town. Luha stayed in Tartu during a homeleave he had during the war. However, this might have been an occasional stopover.

3. Analysis of the subject-letter.

a) The appearance of these two writings leave the impression that they might have been written under duress:

aa) the letters look rigid, without any life in them, as if not been written by a man of 35 to 40 who tells of his troubles and hopes.

ab) the writer made two most uncommon spelling errors, which even a very low-level Estonian would not do, not to speak of any of those 15 men.

He wrote: "Tema jõi sina", instead of "Tema jõi sinna", thus saying "He remained you", instead of "He remained there".

" " "Ma juba varem otsisid" instead of "Ma juba varem otsisin", thus, instead of the right form "I already earlier looked (for)" he made an impossible combination out of the pronoun "I" and the verb with the ending of the third person "He". (This error is incomparable with the "shall and will" error in English, which may be sometimes excusable. In Estonian this error is simply impossible.)

There might be two or more explanations to the way these errors happened:

- either the writer had to copy from a bad handwritten or typed original and was too afraid to notice, or to correct the errors (in this case the writer of the original should have been careless, with bad knowledge of Estonian, or both),

- or the writer wanted to draw by these blunt errors the attention of the receiver to the duress under which he was writing, forced to do this. Such methods of indicating the duress were discussed with these men, for the use in their W/T "handwriting", and some proceedings were agreed upon with some of these men. Unless I shall learn about the identity of the sender of this letter with one of the 15 hands of which we have the samples, I can not find out whether something was agreed upon with him.

b) The text of the main writing is strange, especially the hope that I "surely could help" him, and that I should have means for this. Does this mean simple human help, about which he should know that such a help from me could easily bring some more suffering for him? Or is he still a gallant man, ready to start now again the same work which was agreed upon in 1945? Why, then, did he wait for so long time?

SECRET

SECRET

-4-

c) The sender must have (or he had in 1961) a very special friend, who enjoyed the full trust of the sender, and also of the Communist masters of the country. Otherwise the writer would ~~not~~ not have entrusted him with this most incriminating letter, and the Communist authorities would not have allowed him to go abroad on a tourist trip with such a letter in his pocket. Or the friend must have been a really gallant double-faced man.

d) Strange, although not reflecting upon the writer of the letters, is the very long time the letter took to arrive from Turku, via the Voice of America in Munich, to me.

4. Conclusion.

Whoever Mr. Viikmaa could be of the 15 in the list, I do not feel any personal compulsion to do something what could help him. At this time we all felt being soldiers of Estonia, notwithstanding the German uniforms we had to carry. They did their duty as did my men at the base station and I myself. We all had volunteered to this.

If the Authorities find that this case should be worked at, and my co-operation is desired, I am ready to do my part. Besides of the samples of the handwritings I have some more papers concerning the W/T communications and the ciphering methods foreseen for the five groups. Two or three of my professional W/T operators, who worked in the base station, are somewhere in Canada and Australia.

All the situation is still too unclear to me as to make any suggestions concerning the possible development of the case.

I will take no steps of my own in this matter, except, perhaps informing Rev. Kiviranna on some occasional meeting that I have received the letter. I might change my mind in this in the case that the Authorities shall let me know that there is no interest for any development of this case, and that I shall be allowed to handle at my own discretion.

In case that no use will be made of the case, I would like to have the samples of the handwritings returned to me, for the event that I sometimes later, when not enjoying the help of these authoritative channels, might encounter some more, similar situations.

Enclosures: 1) the Subject-Letter - 2 sheets and the envelope.
2) the Translations of the letters - 2 sheets.
3) the Samples of handwriting, identified by the covernames, - 18 sheets, as follows: Ilves -1, Saadjaerv -1; Kaasik -2, Merisalu -2; Lepik -1, Loo -1, Merik -1; Kramp -1, Puusepp - 1, Luha - 2; Lender - 1, Pohla -1; Tammik -1, Kuusk -1, Ruenk -1.

Albert Kiviranna